How to Search in the Suffolk County Clerk’s Deed Room

1. Read your current deed. Make a note of the Liber (book) and page number, which will be listed on the upper right hand corner of the deed. At the end of the description of your property you may find references to the prior deed and the Liber and page number where it was recorded. Make a note of those numbers too.

2. Go to the Records Room in the Office of the County Clerk at the County Center in Riverhead.

3. Go to the rows of numbered Deed Libers and findthe lowest numbered Liber you found on your deed. This deed may refer you to an earlier one. Work your way backward through earlier deeds.

4. If you have no Liber numbers on your deed, youcan still research your house. Begin with last name of the person from whom youbought your house and look that name up in the indexes in the Record Room. Ifyou bought your home after 1969, you will need to use the terminals in the Public Access Room to look up this information. Land records before 1969 areindexed by both GRANTEE (buyer) and GRANTOR (seller) in large index books inthe Records Room. These volumes are located on opposite sides of the room. Theaisle containing the Grantor indexes has a sign hanging from the ceiling at theend of the aisle. The Grantee indexes that reference the oldest of the deedsare not indicated by a sign, go to the Historic Documents Library and the

Archivist will show you where to find those books.

5. The Grantor/Grantee indexes are organized asfollows: From 1660-1950, all of Suffolk County is indexed in one set of books, arranged alphabetically, by the first letter of the last name, inside eachvolume, the records are arranged by the first letter of the first name. Beginning in 1951 through 1969 the records are divided by Town and within eachtown they are arranged as described above.

6. There are also Mortgage Libers in the RecordsRoom. Many times the mortgage on a property is referenced in the deed. In thecase of earlier deeds this may sometimes be a good indication of when a housewas constructed on a piece of land.

7. As you work your way backward through the earlier deeds, you may come to one that is deeded to someone as the heir of adeceased person. Make a note of that person's name in order to look up the willat the Surrogate's Court. Many times wills are more descriptive of houses thanare deeds.

8. Building permits were, in general, not issued before the early 1920's but you may find reference to a "date of origin" for a house on early permits. These will be on file at your Town

Clerk's Office or in the Building Department. Keep in mind that this date was given by the person applying for the building permit and may be an approximate

date.